TRANSCRIPT—JAMES LINER

Interviewee: James Liner

Interviewer: Zoe Rhine and Joe Newman

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Zoe Rhine: I am Zoe Rhine and I am a librarian in the North Carolina Room. I'm here with Joe Newman, Friend and Board Member of the North Carolina Room. We're at the home of James Liner and W.C. Justice at 24 Soco Street. Today is Monday the 25th of June, 2018. James, I thought I would start by first asking you to say your name and your parents' names and when you were born if you want to.

James Liner: I'm James David Liner. I was born in 1950. My parents were Mary Lou Allen Liner and Joseph Neil Liner.

ZR: Were either of your grandparents from this area?

JL: All my mother's grandparents were from Georgia. Both my granddad and my grandmother met in Georgia. My grandfather was born in 1897 and my grandmother was born in 1900. They were married in 1915. They had three of their children in Georgia. When my mother was six months old they moved here, in 1925. That began their journey on the Biltmore Estate.

ZR: So your grandparents moved here first. They came here what year?

JL: 1925.

ZR: So that was before the Biltmore House was open to the public in 1930, right? And your mother was how old when they moved here?

JL: Six months old when they moved here. When they initially moved here they lived in West Asheville and Papaw would go down to the river. He had a canoe, and he would get on the canoe and paddle across the river and get out and go to work. Then when he'd come back, he would pull the canoe downriver so he could get on it and go back to the place he got off, where he started and go back to work. Then after a while there was a house that came available, and that's when they moved over to the Biltmore Estate. Through the years they moved into several different houses all over the estate. If one would come empty that was bigger than the one you had, and you got to choose it.

ZR: Do you remember the street they lived on in West Asheville?

JL: No.

ZR: Is there a way to describe any of the houses, or the first house, on the estate? I don't suppose they had addresses, or did they?

JL: They didn't have addresses, they were just scattered throughout the estate. One of the houses they lived in was called the Poultry House and it was the original chicken house, where they raised the chickens for the Biltmore House, for the eggs and chickens. They had other outbuildings that had chickens, turkeys and all that kind of stuff in it. And they converted that into a house years after all that stopped. Right down below it was the hog

pens, and that's where they raised the hogs and the pigs for the Biltmore Estate. They lived in that house a while and just around the curve from that were these two little houses in the woods. They lived in one of those and that's where two of my aunts were born.

ZR: That must have been a nice chicken coop to be able to be renovated to a home.

JL: At one point they lived, when they were little, they moved into Antler Hall. It was a great big mansion where the new hotel is now. It was built before the Biltmore House. I've actually got a little picture of it. One of my aunts was born in the Antler Hall. They didn't stay in it too long because Mamaw was scared of the house. It was huge, three or four stories.

Joe Newman: Is that house still—.

JL: No, they tore it down. The picture I've got is right when my granddaddy was born, they were having a Cecil's Christmas party. They lived Antler Hall for awhile, then they moved to several others, but the last house is the house that's at the horse barn at Antler Village right now. That's the one that I'm most familiar with.

JN: And it is still standing, I believe.

JL: Yes. It was actually moved once. Then it was moved it back to where it was originally. That's the house I'm most familiar with, that's where I spent a lot of time, spending the night. Me and my cousins, my sister also. The little girls would go and spend the night when one of the aunts would come from Charlotte. I went down there a lot and spent time with my granddad. Some of the fondest memories is a typical morning,

where you'd get up and it'd still be dark outside. He would get up, you'd hear the coal, he'd put the coal and wood in the furnace. Mamaw would be down there cooking, baking bread. He'd come and get me and we'd go down to the main barn and feed and water the horses. That was the biggest treat for me, to do that.

ZR: My kind of life.

JL: And then you'd come back and we'd have breakfast and everything. He'd go to work so then I'd help Mamaw. I'd go get eggs out of the chicken house, churn the butter, make buttermilk and all that stuff. I thought it was fun. Kids nowadays wouldn't think it was fun.

ZR: Can you tell what your grandfather did on the estate?

JL: He was the farm foreman, in other words he was over the fields and not the dairy cows. He didn't do the dairy part, but he was in charge of the pastures, that kind of stuff. He had a lot of little books that told how many bales of hay was cut that day, and how much corn they'd salvaged, stuff like that. He had two or three old trucks that he drove, their old trucks. He knew where all the main drains that needed to be turned on and turned off were, and he passed that along to my uncle. When he retired, his son, my uncle, took over his position until he retired.

ZR: His name? Your uncle's name?

JL: Bill Allen or William Allen. He had four children, two of which, I think it was only two, were born on the estate. When we all get together, we have to go look at everything on the estate.

ZR: Where exactly were you born?

JL: I was born just below Biltmore School, the school on Hendersonville Road. I was born right down in there.

ZR: In a home that your parents were living in?

JL: Yes, they were renting a house, it's still there. I can't remember the name of the street. And then from there we moved to a house they built out on Hendersonville Road. My other grandparents had a home and Daddy bought some land and built the house out there. Every weekend we went to Biltmore Estate. If it was summer I stayed as long as I could stay, until they made me come home. Then eventually we moved to Candler and then we moved back into the Oakley community. That's when my grandparents retired and we lived right beside them.

JN: What kind of play did you kids do down there?

JL: Oh goodness gracious. One of the fun things we used to do, me and my sister and some of my cousins, we'd go and open the gates, these big old heavy wooden gates and swing. There were cows out there. We would swing and every so often you fell in the manure. And then you really were in trouble. And then we would play in the barn, play in the hay. There was a place out there called Graveyard Hill. Back in our day it was just up from the winery. I don't think there are any trees now, but there were a few trees then. We'd go up there and look at those head stones. As a kid you would imagine all kinds of stuff. We had a lot of fun going up there and scaring each other. That was one of places

we would have Easter egg hunts on the estate. Actually that picture in there is me and my Easter eggs that I was showing you earlier.

ZR: I bet you swam in the river.

JL: We played in the river and there was an old ferry down there. It's still down there, dry docked right now. Papaw would take us to ride across the river on the ferry, we thought we were on a luxury liner. We just had a ball, you know. They'd put the truck on the ferry, his big old truck and take us all on a ride and then we'd go ride around the other side of the river, on the Brevard Road side. Then we'd come back across the river on that old ferry. We'd go to all the places where they'd dump flowers out, flower pots and all that good stuff. We'd go and get dirt so she'd have dirt for her flowers. We'd just do all kinds of stuff. She'd give us tablecloths and we'd hide outside and make forts and all that stuff. And then Daddy and them had two or three horses down there so they'd go horseback riding, buggy riding. Gosh, we'd go up the river. At different times they had boats they'd put in the river and go duck hunting. Then we'd go up and they'd put us up in the woods to make noise so the deer would run out. Crazy, but we had a good time.

ZR: It's a lot of acreage but you must have been all over it.

JL: The biggest part of it. It was only open to the public during the week in the sixties, so on the weekends, me and my cousin would ride our bicycles up to the main house and to the lakes. I can remember one time we went to the bass pond and took string and safety pins, we was going to catch a fish and I think caught some. I can remember roller skating from where one of the restaurants is now, the Deer Park Restaurant. We roller skated

down the road as a kid. Course I was on the grass most of the time but my other cousins—.

ZR: They stayed on their feet.

JL: We did all kinds of things.

ZR: Did your father work on the estate?

JL: No, he was a lather. He worked, put up metal lathing and stuff, on buildings. He worked a lot out of town. Once in a while he'd get a job here and work in town. All of my mother's brothers and sisters and all of my daddy's brothers and sisters knew each other through school. It was just like one humongous family. And it was so much fun.

JN: Did your mother have a job on the estate?

JL: No, she worked for a brief time at the telephone company in town, a telephone operator. Like Edith Ann, you know?

ZR: What about your grandmother?

JL: She was just a housewife.

ZR: But she lived there on the estate.

JL: I can remember there was an old company store where the winery is now. And you could go up there, and the store still had barrels of crackers and bolts of material, penny candy. You could get five pieces of candy for a penny.

ZR: I've never heard of that store.

JL: Dry good stuff. Mamaw would go up there and get material to make dresses and aprons, sometimes curtains.

JN: Now was that for the workers on the estate?

JL: Yes, for the workers.

JN: James, how many people, roughly, were working on the estate? Was it a small enough group that you felt you knew a lot of folks?

JL: I have no clue. We knew a lot of the farm hands, yes. We'd have these great humungous Halloween parties. There at the winery we had our first few Halloween parties in the old original lunchroom, where the workers could look at the clock tower that's down there now, you could see it from any of the pastures or anywhere close. When it became twelve o'clock, all the wives would come and cook their husbands' lunches and they would congregate there. Then that became the place where you could have family reunions because they didn't use it anymore. We'd have our big parties there. It was so much fun. You had to walk across this little bridge of wood. It was fun. We'd have those parties there and oh gosh, we did so much. As time went by and you got a little older, they moved it out to the farm garage, the place where they kept the tractors and the cars and all that. And then all the farmhands started participating and they'd go get corn out of the fields and make these corn mazes that you'd walk through. It really became quite a deal everybody looked forward to.

ZR: What a place for a party. I've always wanted to take the grounds tour there but I haven't yet. I've heard there's several cemeteries still on the property.

JL: I know of at least two that I'm familiar with.

JN: What kind of condition were the grounds in at that time? They're so immaculate today.

JL: Actually I've got some pictures in there that show you just how bad it looked. When we were little, I guess I was eight to ten years old, I would go with Papaw in his truck and one day the cows got out and were on the lawn at the Biltmore House. There were no visitors but he knew the main guard at the Biltmore House. We went up there and he says, "Let's go for a walk in the Biltmore House." Back then all you saw was the main floor and the upstairs, you may have seen her and his bedroom and the little hall, just a few things. That's it. But the guard would take us around and we could see these rooms that water was leaking in, there were window panes out, there were pigeons sitting in places.

ZR: You're kidding. So that would have been about when?

JL: In the mid-sixties, early sixties, somewhere right in there.

ZR: That's sad.

JL: There would be like a room and it was full of nothing but lamps. One would be full of nothing but little chairs, little tables, and small items. Just all clustered in rooms. There'd be big tubs and buckets. So then they started eventually renovating and repairing and look at it now. It was in sad shape. And all the roads around the entire estate when I was—the first memories I have I was five or six years old. All the fields and pastures had this whitewashed painted fence everywhere, all over the estate, with rose bushes growing

on it. Real pretty pink rose bushes. Then as time went by, you couldn't even see the fence because everything grew up, the roses got so big. They tore all those fences out eventually. I can remember when I would go down there and like I said, water and feed the horses at the Biltmore House. It was a working barn. As time went on, they quit doing that kind of work and they took one whole section, where the beautiful stalls were, and tore it out so they could park the buggies. They messed it up. They had a garage there, the first original garage where they worked on all the old timey trucks. My daddy and uncle restored their old cars in there. He was a member of the antique car club. I've got a picture of that too. Then it just kept going down and going down and there for a while they were taking scrap metal. Their people would park old cars, just junk, and they went through a period of time they were hauling stuff to the junkyard. Of course I was getting stuff out of the junk.

JN: That's the start of this collection.

JL: Actually, this trunk right here, it was in the back of my granddaddy's truck that he had whenever. It was up on blocks and he always kept it covered with canvas cloth. That's what we would sit on when we'd go for a ride, up the river, across the river. So when he passed on, my granny said, "You'd better get that out of the truck because nobody wants it," and I said, "Okay." I had gone many a time with Papaw to tear down houses because they got in disrepair, which they shouldn't have torn down but they did. And I can remember one time he says, "Boy, come on. I found something we gotta go get." I said, "Oh goody, I'm going to Papaw's." So we took the truck down and we was in one of the houses they called The Line. It was maybe eight houses, and they were farmhouses where the employees lived. I think there's two left now. When they started

getting bad, they'd just tear them down. And in one of those was this big cabinet, really rustic looking. It was too tall to use anywhere so he cut off what he wanted and I've got it down in the shed in back. That's where Mamaw kept her fruit jars, in her basement. They were tearing the house down and it was going to be gone. That was one way to save things.

JN: And this would have been during the sixties?

JL: The early sixties.

ZR: You'd think there would have been some sort of trust fund left to at least keep the house in good order. Who was in charge of it at that time?

JL: I'm not sure. I think both of the two brothers were still doing all this together.

JN: Was that the Cecil brothers?

ZR: And one did the farm?

JL: One certain point in time, one took the farm and the Biltmore House and the other took the dairy and everything on the other side of the river. That's where they have the property divided. I don't know all the details on that.

ZR: Do you know who your father would have been—who did he work for?

JL: My grandaddy?

ZR: Yes, sorry. Did he have any relationship with any of the family?

JL: They knew them when they first came up here because I've got a copy of an invitation to the party at the Biltmore House in 1927. Mamaw said they invited all the farm people and the children and everybody went up there on Christmas Eve. They had the house decorated very pretty back then, more natural than you have it today. Mamaw said it was beautiful. They had a gift for all the children and then the grownups got a gift. They had this wonderful big meal for them and used the dining room and everything, just like you would for regular guests coming to your home. In the center dining room was an elevator in it, and Santa Claus would come down the elevator. They had that every year for so many years and then it stopped because they were starting to do the public tours and everything. They did all kind of stuff like that.

JN: In your day, James, did you see the family very often and were they friendly to you all?

JL: If I did, I didn't know. I don't know if it was William or Bill, I don't remember because it was always Mr. Cecil, but the one that was in charge of the Biltmore House, they were just the nicest and sweetest, most common people, you didn't know that it was theirs. They were just really good folk. They literally loved my Uncle Bill, absolutely to death. They trusted him with anything. Matter of fact, when he passed they all came to his funeral.

ZR: Just because I'm curious, the time you were there, when your grandfather was still working on the property, were there Black people employed?

JL: I don't remember seeing any Blacks to be honest. But of course it was a close knit little family there, the men that worked with him, and there were a lot of people we didn't

know that lived way up the river or on the Brevard side. We just didn't go there that often. I know in the town of Biltmore, there was a Biltmore Hardware, and one of those gentlemen that was Black and he was the sweetest and the nicest man you'd ever meet and everyone knew him, coming and going from the hardware store.

ZR: I remember going to that hardware store.

JL: The Biltmore Hardware.

ZR: Do you know the date of when your grandfather retired and your uncle took his place?

JL: My granddaddy died in 1969. He retired in 1962. Somewhere either before or during that was when my uncle started doing his job. It wasn't necessarily the same thing, it was a little bit more involved. But that's when he took over. And he did that job until he retired. All of my aunts and uncles grew up there. Mother would say a typical day was when you had to walk in the darkness from Biltmore where the gate is, the arched gate, to get back home. She said, "You talk about dark." She said they'd have to take a stick to feel the road. And then you'd hear creatures. She said, "I don't think I was late very many times."

ZR: Are any of your aunts and uncles still alive?

JL: I've got two aunts that are still alive, both of those aunts were born down there. One of them is ninety years old, just turned ninety, and the other one is, I think, eighty-eight.

ZR: Tell me their names.

JL: Edna is the one that's ninety years old and Martha is the one that's eighty-eight. And that's the last two of the kids left. Boy, Edna can tell you some stories. And she can tell them four or five times in a row. But it's always a treasure when she tells it.

ZR: Is she still in the area?

JL: She lives in Arden and my other aunt lives in Candler.

ZR: Do you think they would be interested in talking?

JL: Possible. All depends on their ailments. One aunt, right now she's in the hospital. I know my Aunt Edna would love it. She would just love it. She'd sit and just talk, talk, talk. Like I say, I spent time down there until the time I graduated in from high school in 1969.

ZR: I was going to ask you where you went to school.

JL: A. C. Reynolds.

JN: And where to elementary?

JL: Oakley. Before then Papaw had about given up driving because one day we were going to the Biltmore Estate in his panel truck and he just went through the red light, up on the sidewalk, around all this stuff and I was just scared to death. He pulls the truck over and he says, "Son, I think you better start driving for me." So we would drive. We'd drive his old car and the truck, me, him, and Mamaw piled up and here we'd go. He wouldn't let none of his kids drive his car or his truck. No other grandkid, only me. Here we'd load up and go. They had gas, employees could get gas down there, up to a certain

point. And he'd say, "We gotta go take the car and the truck to get gas. We'll take one today and one tomorrow and while we're down there, let's run around.

ZR: He was a lot of fun.

JL: He was, he really was. He taught me a lot about how to trim shrubbery the proper way they do down there. Of course they don't do it proper now because everything's machines. They would do by hand back in the day. That's how I still trim it. I do it with a pair of scissors. Like the ivy you see out there, I don't use a trimmer. I just use a pair of scissors, just go out there and chop, chop, chop. And it was so funny, at the point in time when I was growing up on the Biltmore Estate, he lived just across the river in a house that the Biltmore people had built, made out of bricks and stuff, they didn't own it. They lived in that house over there.

ZR: Really? I didn't realize that you grew up here.

JL: Just across the river. Now here we are. I said, "I might have seen you sometime. I don't know if I did or not."

JN: James, did y'all raise or produce some of the food that you ate, like eggs or whatever?

JL: Mamaw's house, this last house I'm telling you about, down there at the horse barn, she had a huge garden. I mean it was huge. And we had a big henhouse, and then in that house that's not there anymore, there was a little room off the kitchen, and it was where they seasoned and cured hams. So you'd go in there and there'd be two or three hams and there would be sage, there would be any kind of herb. She canned her peaches. She

canned sausage. She put the meat and everything through the grinder and made her own sausage and canned it. She canned peaches, dried apples. There were two rooms in that kitchen. One was a big cupboard that had nothing but shelves. And it was full of peaches, canned tomatoes, blackberries, anything. This was before freezers. And then I think there was a period of time when they bought her a freezer. That was the biggest square box I've ever seen. And when you opened it, it was little. The sides were that thick. It was coils probably or something. And she was learning to freeze corn and stuff like that.

JN: Did the estate buy her that?

JL: No. One of her daughters did. Her oldest daughter just had to introduce anything new that come out. She had to bring Mamaw one. And Mamaw did not like that stuff. She brought her a can opener and she said, "This is the awfullest thing I've ever seen in my life." She had one of those that you stabbed a can with. A lethal weapon. The driveway came up behind the house—there were two identical houses. It had a shared big garage. And they both had a huge garden. They had a huge garden but there was this, I call it a cave, it had a rock front and it was built back into the bank and Papaw would put hay and sawdust back in there and they would put tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes, and then they would put turnips, and they'd cover all that up and they'd have green tomatoes and you'd bring them out and in a couple three days you'd have a good ripe red tomato. And that's how they did that. And then, like I said, they had chickens and they raised hogs.

ZR: The estate did?

JL: They quit raising hogs so then the employees started raising their own stuff to eat.

ZR: You'd think somewhere between the community of workers there and the estate that there would have been community gardens.

JL: Every house had a garden.

ZR: So they were all for themselves?

JL: There was a little book somewhere I was looking at not long ago and Papaw would write down that he credited Joe, who worked there, with so many boards, and so much wire, nails and this was for his henhouse. And they'd build a henhouse but then they had to pay back for those materials by the month. I guess that's how they did it. And they had records where they kept where they'd do stuff like that. And then they would raise hogs, they would kill deer and have deer meat, ducks, quail, pheasants. They had pretty good things. They'd go fishing and have fish. I couldn't eat fish because I was scared of bones. They had everything there that they needed. Now in the early days before me, Mamaw would go to that little store and you could get your flour and your meal, and sometimes lard. Just things like that. And she'd go get those things and everything else they had. And they had a little credit with that store. I've got one of the things where they wrote credit, and they had a cash register with a little bitty strip, I've got some of those. See, when they started tearing all that stuff down there, they'd just go in the building and throw it outside. And why in the world did I start grabbing that stuff up? In the horse barn at one time, we went down there and there was two of these beautiful carriages that they set in there and then there was one like you see cowboys and Indians on, and we went in there one Saturday and all the wheels were gone off, somebody had come in there and stole the wheels. Then the next week they drive up to the door to haul them off, to throw

them in the woods, nobody wanted them. So my uncle and daddy took the two buggy seats off, two of the buggy seats. I've got one upstairs that's been reupholstered. Daddy made a bottom and it's like a little loveseat. And the other one was a wooden seat and Daddy took bottom off it and made a little seat. This cabin that I talk about quite often—can I tell that story, just a little bit of it, about the cabin?

ZR: The Antler?

JL: No, the honeymoon lodge up on Pisgah.

ZR: Okay.

JL: The Buckhorn Lodge, when they tore it down, I guess I was about ten years old when we started going up there. My uncle had found out about this and the Parkway was getting ready to buy the property. They tore it down for no reason because the footings and stuff are still there. He went up there and bought logs and made a log home out of it in Arden. And I can remember going up there and it was still fully furnished and there was art on the wall and the draperies were all rotten and everything, but it was still almost as was. And they came in and took whatever art was on the walls that they wanted and the rest of it they had an auction one day. He said, "They're auctioning that stuff, we're going." He bought some dressers and stuff. I've got a dresser upstairs that he paid two dollars for. And if you didn't buy the stuff, if nobody bought it at the end of the day, they threw it off the side of the mountain. So he bought a lot of furniture up there and had it restored and when he built the cabin out in Arden, that's what it was furnished with.

ZR: He bought logs from the cabin?

JL: Yes. When he passed away and then my aunt passed away, my cousins donated the cabin, or the log part of the cabin, back to the estate and it's built right now there in Antelope Village, right at the horse barn. So when they tore it down up on Pisgah, they brought the logs and stored them in the horse barn, and then it was moved to Arden, and now it's built back down there, right in front of the house. I spent a lot of time up there.

ZR: So that cabin, originally you called it the Honeymoon Cabin?

JL: Well, there was a little honeymoon cabin, somebody bought that entire cabin. And the little cabin that my uncle and them got the logs out of, was just before you went to the entrance of the main lodge, and that's where they got the logs, out of that. And then he got bathtubs and stuff when they were tearing up the cabin.

ZR: So that would have been with the Vanderbilt family, originally.

JL: Yes, that was their hunting lodge, up on Pisgah. We spent a lot of time up there when I was a kid. My uncle would make Papaw drive the truck up there to get logs. We'd come down that mountain and he'd be driving and I'd be so scared because I wasn't able to drive then. And these logs were sticking out, they didn't tie something red on them, they would use somebody's clothes hanging off the back, an old shirt or something.

JN: He had already planned how he wanted to use them, he had the cabin in mind?

JL: My daddy actually drew the blueprints to that cabin and actually that tray out there is the picture from the blueprint. Then Daddy took a tray and made that picture of that cabin. I made a small log cabin for a school project—pick it up and look at the bottom, Joe—that was my project when I was in high school.

JN: That photo is James, showing his classmates this cabin.

JL: I guess that's over fifty years old, that little cabin, right now. I was just so infatuated with it, my uncle was so good to me to take me. Some Sundays he would come down there and take me, just me. Me and him would go down there and we'd make my uncle go for rides on the Biltmore Estate, going to all the houses that were empty. Go to the house and the barn and that's what we did from the time I was little until—well, I never quit going, but as times got on, I was married at one point and of course we went down there too.

JN: James is still a great carpenter and a great artist.

JL: My daddy took a master carpenter and he went down and there was a carpenter called W.C. Clements and he was the main carpenter at the Biltmore House. And the music room had not been finished and they could not figure out how to make the panels to go on the wall. And my daddy and that man actually made a router bit, they had a sample, and they made all those panels you see right now. He helped restore old cars, there was a couple of old cars down there that belonged to the Vanderbilts. He restored the wooden pieces in there. Daddy could do anything and of course, who tagged along? Me.

ZR: I'm real anxious to see some of the photographs. Are there some we can look at here or do we travel?

JL: I was going to show you a couple pictures of that cabin. This was the cabin when it was built down in Arden and what it was is these logs and then there was a smaller cabin that was just fronted with those logs from the lodge. And Uncle Bob lived there for years.

And we had our Christmas parties, those people I've been telling you about, these are all those people. That was our Santa Claus, which I have upstairs sitting in a chair. They got that in the sixties and it's so funny because Uncle Bob got the house finished and the first party that was ever held in that house was on Christmas Eve just like George Vanderbilt did. That's how infatuated he was with the Biltmore Estate. And my daddy built the house and all the paneling and everything that came from up on the mountain, the lodge. And this is just different times, different people. That was my granny. Some little pictures of me. All right, this was it the year before the cabin in Arden was torn down and donated to the Biltmore Estate. This was our last party at the house. And these are pictures of how it was decorated, some of the furnishings and stuff that were in it. And a lot of these pieces of furniture came from the lodge. That was a copy of that invitation from 1927 that my grandparents had inviting them to the Biltmore House.

JN: These are wonderful to have, what you have, James. JL: That's what the new cabin looks like. I'm real proud of it but I'm disappointed because it's not like it was at Christmas. But they use it for the Land Rovers, you go in to rent you a Land Rover. And that's the front porch of the original cabin up on the lodge. There's a little article in there about this, that and whatever.

ZR: You started with reused logs.

JL: And that old truck I was telling you about that this truck come out of? That's the old truck.

ZR: Wow, how cool. And it's sitting in it. Is that it? The truck?

JL: You can see how nasty the place was down there. The truck was stored where you go down there to look now. They let it run down. That's the rear end of the truck and this truck sits right up against the cab. And you can see those wonderful columns and stuff they just tore down and threw out. But the truck is still down there, in a barn somewhere across the river. Now this is when they cleaned it up a little and put the new parking lot in. There's a couple of pictures in there, I'll show you and you won't believe what it looked like. That's just about the cabin and Christmases and stuff like that.

ZR: I'm going to take this one off and take this with us. Is that okay?

JL: The lodge up there, along the breezeway, had these lanterns, ever so many feet, from the kitchen area all up through to the main lodge. Every so often it had these lanterns and it had stained glass in it and at night they would light candles and put it in those. So when they tore it down they was just taking these off to auction. I've got this one and I've got another one down in the garden shed. This is an old ice cream bucket right here . They used to pack ice in that and then pack the ice cream in there.

ZR: Do you mind if I get a photo of some of these things?

JL: If I hadn't happened to get some of these things, they'd never be here. They would've been thrown away. That little round table in there is one of Granny's pieces that we found on that little house on the Biltmore Estate in a little bay window. I'll show you this right quick so you'll know a little bit about what Papaw looked like. He was born in 1897, this is his little baby clothes.

ZR: Is this him?

JL: That was him when he was four years old. He was taken when he was four years old by a traveling salesman.

ZR: Buttons?

JL: Little snaps and buttons and stuff in there. I have a little bit of his hair down there too. That's a lock of his hair. On the back of this it says, "Ernest and Vernie Allen, Made July (?)." This would have been my papaw's typical work outfit. His overalls, and he would wear a long underwear, summer and winter. And boots, sometimes a plaid shirt. Sundays he would wear white shirts. This is the Biltmore Bridge and the little story that I did on that. And this came out of that tool box that was full of screws, so on the back of it, I put that this came from Ernest Allen's toolbox. One of these years someone will say, "Gosh, look at that." And this is a picture of cows that were on the Biltmore Estate. Every time I look at it, I think, "I ran you out of the pasture." And this is the way he typically dressed like I'm telling you. Here's his overalls, he's in the washroom and somebody took his picture. That was his little thing, he had his gold watch on, he always carried that. He had a beautiful gold watch and Mamaw washed it at the laundromat, killed it. And that's my daddy, down at the horse barn with one of the horses I was telling you about. These are family photos from the Biltmore Estate and that was Ernest and Vernie and that was two of their kids. And that's my mother, Mamaw, and three of her sisters. And then that's the sisters. The cows were tagged. These were the tags that were around the cows' neck. That was whatever cow's number. There's another one right there. These were around the cow's necks and they had tons of these and they were hauling them to the junkyard. This is my little souvenir thing. That is the old, when you buy milk, that was your little milk book. The milkman would come and you'd tear out your—however much you spend on

milk. And this was from the store I was telling you about, little credit forms that you can fill out if you wanted to get something on credit, that's what it was put on.

JN: Did they deliver milk all over Asheville?

JL: Yes. If you were retired you got free milk wherever you lived, if you lived within a reasonable distance. And this was one of the little receipts from that old store. And these were books where he had—can't see what it says, alfalfa or something—where he had written down how much hay or whatever it was. That was his little ledger that he kept stuff in. And the milkmen in the sixties wore these little ties, when they would come and deliver the milk, they would wear those cute little ties. One of the old restaurants had those, and they threw all them away so I had to have one of them.

ZR: When did that go down?

JL: That was maybe late seventies, something like that. It was one of the restaurants that's up at the Deer Park.

ZR: The ones there on Hendersonville Road, right at the entrance to the estate?

JL: That was from a restaurant that used to be on the Biltmore Estate. That menu came from down there, that's one of the old menus from the dairy bar. Tells you all the good stuff they had. All the funny little ugly cows.

ZR: I don't think we have one of their menus. They are funny cows.

JL: My sister worked there for one summer for about three weeks. This was the house we were talking about that I showed you the pictures of. That's my sister, my sister and a

cousin, that's daddy on the horse near the house. That's Mamaw in the living room, Papaw in the dining room of that house. There he is in the living room. That's one of our many picnics. There's me, of course, doing something stupid. There's another picture of the front door of the old house. And actually there's a glider rocker out on the porch. There were two of them that set on that porch, my sister's got them. Biltmore House, Biltmore Farm, all kind of neat stuff.

JN: This is the kind of work that James does.

JL: This is my dot art. Then I do silly things. These are the things I do, there's a bunch in this house.

ZR: That looks like stuff I've seen from Mexico.

JN: Or Africa.

JL: They all have a texture. I spray things black. Most of them are pottery or wooden. These are a bunch of pictures—

ZR: Do you have a kiln?

JL: No. I buy all this stuff at Goodwill. It looks like something else. A lot of these pictures are from one of the houses that's right below the first new inn down there that they built. There's a little brown house and they restored it, well that's where Mamaw and them lived during the war and these are all pictures of the kids in the war, all down there. And that's my granddaddy's entire family, his brothers and sisters, in that yard. All these were taken at that one house. There's my uncle Bill, when he was dressed in his uniform. All those were taken at that one little house. It's still there, they restored it. This

is the funniest one I have. I love this picture. It's our picnic. That's Mamaw and Papaw, look at their little social cake. That's my mama and this old canner, that one right there, it used sit down in the stove.

ZR: He's got the canner sitting next to the picture.

JL: Every picnic you took that full of green beans or something and so I just had to keep them all.

ZR: I think I remember a stove with the hole in it.

JL: Yeah, it would sit down in the stove. I thought that was so funny. There it is. This is up there at the pavilion up there at Deer Park. It's still there but they're building this huge thing behind it. And that's where we'd go and we'd have Easter Egg Hunts and Easter dinners. We just had our last reunion up there before they started construction. And that's us eating at these tables. All of this is at that one place, up there. I told you I had lots of stuff, Joe.

JN: I've seen some of it but not nearly all of it.

JL: There's my Biltmore Dairy cloth up there. I keep those milk cartons way in the back. This is an old grinder that was in the lodge up there. My uncle bought it. I was real pitiful for years and he finally told me to just shut up and take it on. So I did.

ZR: Do you know if that was local?

JL: I went somewhere and got the Piggly Wiggly bag, because there used to a Piggly Wiggly up here at the end of the street. The first store was a Piggly Wiggly. He always

wanted a Piggly Wiggly bag so we got one. I've got my collection of milk bottles. This is all the ice cream. You could get your ice cream in these.

ZR: Now that's going back some, isn't it?

JL: It can just go on and on.

( )

JN: There's stuff everywhere. James, there are Biltmore glasses in here, the clear ones—.

JL: They're mementoes from places. My Aunt Edna gave me one and then when they tore a cabin down, the students at Biltmore, they were out there and my cousins said, "You've got to take these."

[This transcription ends at 1:02:05; last nine minutes are informal conversation about objects and artwork around the house.]

END OF INTERVIEW.